

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES: INDIANA'S PROGRESS

THEN

Caseworkers: Indiana child protection caseworkers carried unmanageable caseloads and lacked appropriate training.

- Caseloads were 3 – 4 times the levels recommended by the Child Welfare League of America.
- A 2004 study of the IU School of Social Work found that 35% of caseworkers were on the job for 6 months before receiving basic training. Most caseworkers began handling cases before they had completed any training.

- 56.52% of children had monthly contact with their caseworker

Spending on child abuse and prevention: Prior to 2005, Indiana was last in the nation in the percentage of federal dollars spent in proportion to state and local money spent on child protection and welfare.

- Indiana spent 28% of federal dollars in proportion to state and local money, while the national average was 50%.
- Indiana did not apply for federal grant dollars that it was entitled to—millions of dollars were left on the table

Federal Lawsuit: The Indiana Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the state in federal court in the late 1980's, arguing that the state was failing children and families. A consent decree was entered into in the early 1990's in which the state agreed to make significant changes. Before 2005, the state had still not satisfied the consent decree terms.

Attention on child services within state government: Before 2005, child welfare was administered through the Division of Family and Children, one of several divisions of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). FSSA was also responsible for such programs as mental health, Medicaid, the elderly, and the disabled. The agency was too big and too cumbersome to be truly effective to serve some of Indiana's most vulnerable population—children.

- When Governor Daniels took office, Indiana was first in the nation in child deaths.
- Between 1996 and 2004, Indiana lost an average of more than 1 child a week from cases of abuse or neglect—this was a rate nearly twice the national average

NOW

Caseworkers: Governor Daniels recognized that more qualified caseworkers were needed to help lower caseloads and improve quantity and quality of services for abused and neglected children.

- Governor Daniels directed the hiring of 750 new child protection workers (and additional supervisors) -- thereby doubling the number of DCS caseworkers.
- Every caseworker now must have a college degree in social work or a related field, and receive 12 weeks of mandatory training and mentoring before they take cases in the field.
- The state will meet nationally-recognized caseload standards by summer 2008.
- 88.58% of children have monthly contact with their caseworker

Spending on child abuse and prevention: Since FY 2005, Governor Daniels has increased funding for child welfare by an additional \$77 million -- without raising taxes and within the first back-to-back balanced budgets in more than 8 years.

- Necessary changes were made to allow Indiana to finally become compliant with the 1974 Federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA), and Indiana can now apply for federal grants exceeding \$750,000 per year.

Federal Lawsuit: In 2007, the governor's efforts were recognized by the Indiana Civil Liberties Union and the federal courts when the consent decree against the state was lifted as a result of the significant improvements made in just 2 ½ years of child welfare reform.

Attention on child services within state government: As one of his first official acts, the governor signed an Executive Order creating the Indiana Department of Child Services.

- DCS is a stand-alone, cabinet level agency dedicated entirely to child welfare. DCS is responsible for such programs as child protection, abuse and neglect prevention, adoption, foster care, and child support.
- He appointed a nationally-recognized child welfare expert, Marion County Juvenile Court Judge, James Payne, to lead the agency.
- Currently, child deaths have been reduced by over 50% since 2002.